

RESIDENTIAL

One of the essential elements of the community and the Plan is housing. Ensuring safe and adequate housing is an important function in maintaining the vitality of neighborhoods, towns and cities. This section portrays the current condition of housing in Lancaster County.

Changes in housing, such as the growth or decline of households, are a reflection of prevailing economic and social conditions and policies in a community.

HOUSING INVENTORY

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, the number of housing units in Lancaster County rose from 86,734 units in 1990 to 104,217 units in 2000 – an increase in the housing stock of 17,483 units. The increase in housing units predominantly occurred in the City of Lincoln. Lincoln had 95,199 housing units in 2000, or 91.3 percent of the housing units in Lancaster County. This ratio is consistent with data from 1990 when about 91 percent of the housing units (79,079 units) in Lancaster County were in Lincoln.



In 2000, housing occupancy for Lancaster County stood at 95.2 percent, with a vacancy rate of 4.8 percent. This rate is comparable to the 95.4 occupancy rate in 1990 and 94.0 occupancy rate in 1980.

NEW CONSTRUCTION

Data on building permits provides information regarding construction trends and reflects market demand through the planning period. Between 1991 and 2000, construction permits were issued for 17,867 dwelling units in the City of Lincoln. Of this total, 8,274 permits (46 percent) were for multi-family units, while 9,593 permits (54 percent) were for single-family or duplex units. In Lincoln, approximately two-thirds of new single-family units were developed in two areas — southeast and northwest. The development of multi-family units was generally distributed proportionally among three areas — southeast, northeast, and northwest. The total value of permits issued for new residential construction, additions and alterations increased from approximately \$106 million in 1991 to \$219 million in 2000.





Local sales data reported by the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce indicates that the average sale price for a new home in Lincoln in 1999 was approximately \$167,000 and that the average sale price for an existing home in 1999 was almost \$107,000. The Lincoln Chamber reports also that overall housing costs in Lincoln are roughly in line with the national average, according to the American Chamber of Commerce Researchers Association.

AGE AND CONDITION

In general, Lincoln's housing stock is in good condition. The City's Urban Development Department used County Assessor data to conduct a study in 2000 of the conditions of residential structures in Lincoln. This study found that 53 percent of the residential structures were in excellent condition, 38 percent were in good condition, 8 percent were in fair condition, and less than 1 percent were classified as poor or dilapidated.

HOME OWNERSHIP RATES

The overall housing tenure in Lancaster County remained relatively stable over the past 40 years, with home ownership rates staying around 60 percent.

The areas with the highest levels of home ownership are in the south and eastern portions of the City, the Country Club neighborhood, and the Highlands in the north part of Lincoln. The lowest home ownership rates are in the City's central neighborhoods. However, according to the Urban Development Department, home ownership rates in central neighborhoods stabilized between 1990 and 2000.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Lincoln Housing Authority is active in providing safe, affordable housing to city residents. The agency also promotes home ownership for all persons in Lincoln.

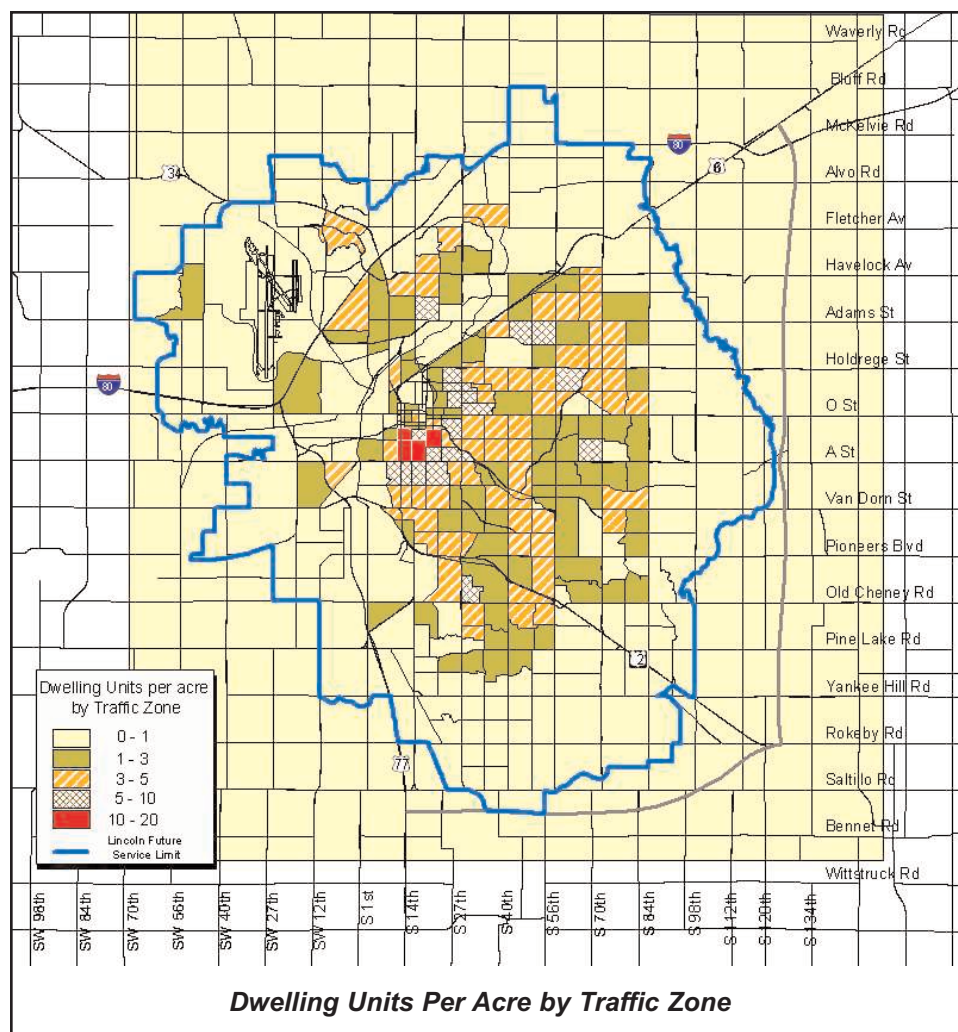
The LHA provides affordable housing through the management of properties owned by the authority and through the administration of the federal Housing Choice Voucher Program. The Housing Choice Voucher Program is administered throughout Lancaster County. The LHA invests approximately \$12 million annually in the Lincoln and Lancaster County housing market. In the past few years, LHA has constructed over one hundred new dwelling units in two new neighborhoods in south Lincoln.

The LHA also actively manages over 1,250 housing units in Lincoln. The LHA also provides a wide array of services for area residents including two home ownership programs, a tenant services office and several joint programs that offer emergency shelter for persons who are homeless or subjected to domestic violence.

DWELLING UNIT DENSITY

The adjacent map shows the number of dwelling units per total acres within traffic zones for January 1, 2001. Traffic zones vary in size from as small as four blocks in the Downtown area, up to one-half of a square mile in sub-urban areas, and as large as several square miles in the County. The total area in each traffic zone includes all land uses, such as commercial, industrial and right-of-way for roads in addition to residential areas. Thus, this measure is considered the “gross” density per acre. The “net” density would be if only the total number of dwelling units were divided by only the number of residential acres, excluding all other uses.

The density in the urban area ranges from 1 to 3 dwelling units per total acre in suburban areas to as much as 19 per total acre in the Downtown area. Older neighborhoods generally have a greater density than newer areas. Many sub-urban areas have low densities at this time because they are not fully developed.



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